REDISHER WORKS, HOLCOMBE BROOK, BURY

Archaeological Assessment

Matrix Archaeology

March 2008

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Archaeological Assessment

Report No. 2008-04

Client: Bloor Homes

© Matrix Archaeology Ltd,
Kenwood House,
10 Kenwood Road,
Stretford,
Manchester
M32 8PT

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SUMMARY

Documentary research revealed that the study area was within the boundary of land granted to the monks of Monk Bretton priory during the late medieval period, and lay in very close proximity to the site of a manorial corn mill first mentioned in 1246. A bleachworks was established at the site in the early 19th century, and was successively enlarged during the late 19th century, under the ownership of the Knowles family of Tottington, and again in the early 20th century. The walkover revealed structural remains of late 19th century bleachworks buildings, as well as a tunnel related to a short-lived brickworks. Building recording and trial trenching are recommended prior to site redevelopment, as well as permanent historical signage being erected at the site entrance.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 An archaeological desk-based assessment of land at Redisher Works, Holcombe Brook, was undertaken by Matrix Archaeology Ltd during March 2008, on behalf of the client, Bloor Homes of Wilmslow; in advance of a proposed private development. The work was undertaken in accordance with PPG16, and was commissioned by Mr Tony Newton, Land Manager with Bloor Homes.

1.2 The proposed development area ('the study area') comprised an area of *circa* 1.6 hectares, located a short distance to the north-west of the junction of the A676 and B6214 roads, at Holcombe Brook, 2km to the south-west of Ramsbottom town centre (NGR SD778154) (**Figure 1**). At the time of the assessment, the site was occupied largely by 20th century disused industrial buildings and associated yard areas.

1.3 The study area was located partially within the south-western limit of the Holcombe Conservation Area. There were no Scheduled Ancient Monuments in close proximity to the study area, although there were a number of Listed Buildings.

1.4 The desk-based assessment comprised consultation of a number of primary and secondary documentary sources, as well as all easily available historic cartographic sources. This was followed by a site walkover in order to determine survival or likely survival of any above or below-ground archaeological sites and features, in accordance with advice from central government as outlined in *Planning Policy Guidance Notes PPG15* and *PPG16*.

1.5 A gazetteer of features and sites has been produced; this is complimented by a plan (**Figure 8**) which shows the locations of recorded sites and structures. Extracts from relevant historic plans are also included (**Figures 2** to **7**).

1.6 Acknowledgements

Mark Fletcher produced the report text and the figures. The historical research and the walkover were undertaken by Mark Fletcher and Steven Price.

1.7 Disclaimer and limitations

Please note that the contents of this report are intended exclusively to promote the historical and archaeological understanding of the site. They must not be used for any other purpose without the written consent of Matrix Archaeology. Matrix Archaeology accepts no responsibility for any use, whole or partial, of this report without such written authority.

2. SITE LOCATION

2.1 The study area was located in the valley of the Holcombe Brook, c.1.25km from its confluence with the river Irwell. The valley bottom is located at c.165m O.D., to the north the valley flank rises steeply onto the 'bench & ledge' topography of Harcles Hill (371m O.D.) and Bull Hill (418m O.D.), and the headwaters of the Holcombe Brook rise on the upper slopes of the latter massif. To the south and west, the valley flank rises only c.20m, and beyond here is an extensive pasture areas at c.200m O.D. To the north-west, the valley is clad by deciduous woodland, known as Redisher Wood, this was a very well-known and well-visited 'tourist amenity' prior to 1939. To the south-west, the modern Ramsbottom suburb of 'Holcombe Brook' developed around the road junction, and the terminal station of the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway's Tottington Branch line, which was abandoned in 1963.

2.2 The solid geology below the study area comprises the Millstone Grit of the Carboniferous period. These gritstones are exposed within the floor and flanks of the valley of the Holcombe Brook, and across much of the high ground to the north. Because of the position at the core of the Rossendale anticline, the local bedding is horizontal, which gives rise to the characteristic 'bench & ledge' topography, derived from differential erosion of the hill flanks (Geological Survey of Great Britain, Sheet 76, Solid Edition). The gritstones have been worked by quarrying along the south-west side of the study area, although the only working quarry for this rock type in the area is Marshall's at Scout Moor, c.2km to the north-east of the study area.

2.3 The drift geology underlying the study area consists of englacial boulder clays, immediately to the south-west and north-east of the valley. These form an extensive spread which blankets all but the higher moorland areas, and it underlies all other drift deposits (Geological Survey of Great Britain, Sheet 76, Drift Edition). The brickworks which operated within the study area in c.1891 used boulder clay derived from the northern flank of the valley. To the north-west of the study area, a parallel valley to that of the Holcombe Brook has developed, this feature has been interpreted as a glacial overflow channel (Wright, et al, 1927).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Historical research was undertaken at the Lancashire Record Office, Bury Local Studies Library, Bury Archive Service, Ramsbottom Library, and the Matrix Archaeology library. All easily available primary, secondary, and cartographic sources were consulted, and in some cases, photocopied.

3.2 After preparation of a map regression exercise, a site walkover was undertaken on 17 March 2008. A copy of the existing topographic survey was utilised, with relevant features being located on the plan by use of a Laser Distomat. Following the walkover, these were added to the digital survey in AutoCAD. A number of the O.S. plans were also digitized as overlays onto the survey, to locate the positions of destroyed buildings. Each feature recorded in the field, or identified from the early plans, was allocated a unique number, and these were used to prepare a gazetteer.

4. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 For the purposes of this report, the periods discussed are as follows:

Neolithic	4,000 – 1,800 BC
Bronze Age	1,800 – 600 BC
Iron Age	600 BC – AD 43
Roman/Romano-British:	AD 43 - AD 450
Early Medieval:	AD 450 - AD 1066
Medieval:	AD 1066 - AD 1540
Early Post Medieval:	AD 1540 - AD 1750
Late Post Medieval:	AD 1750 - present

4.2 Prehistoric/Roman periods

Flints of Neolithic origin have been recovered from the slopes of Bull Hill, c.2km to the north of the study area; whilst a Bronze Age stone 'battle axe' was found at Cinder Hill, 1.5km north-west of the study area, and an Early Bronze Age axe-hammer was found at Holcombe village in 1904 (Barnes, 1982, 102). Furthermore, a pollen profile investigated at Harcles Hill, c.1.5km north of the study area suggested that "there is direct evidence of massive local clearance of woodland, accompanied by soil erosion, in the Middle and Late Bronze Ages" (Tallis & McGuire, 1972, 736).

There may be a Bronze Age barrow just to the north of Hawkshaw, c.2km to the west of the study area, which lies adjacent to the Quarlton-Tottington Lower End township boundary; and there may be a Bronze Age cairn near to the Pilgrim's Cross site on Bull Hill, c.2.5km to the north of the study area.

There is good evidence for an Iron Age/Roman period native settlement at Castle Steads, Burrs, c.3km south-east of the study area, where excavation work in 1992 demonstrated features of that date within a hilltop defended settlement (Fletcher, 1992).

4.3 Medieval period

Historically, the study area was located within the Manor of Tottington, which was held by the de Montbegon and then by the de Lacy families. In 1321 it passed with the Duchy of Lancaster to the Crown, then becoming the 'Royal Manor of Tottington. The manor was nominally part of Bury Parish, and was subdivided into two townships, Tottington Higher End and Tottington Lower End. The latter township had a chapel at Holcombe, established before 1509, and the Manorial Court which functioned at Holcombe until 1864.

In 1176, Holcombe Forest was given by Roger de Montbegon to the monks of Monk Bretton, near Pontefract. This grant, to be confirmed in 1236, comprised 3,000 acres of woodland, pasture, and moorland, and was bounded by Quarlton, Longshaw Head, Alden Head, Harcles Hill, Pilgrims Cross Wood, Tittleshaw, Tittleshaw Brook, the lane of thieves to Salterbrigge, to the road of Oskelei (Ox Hey Lane?). On the O.S. plan for 1844-7, the bridge at Holcombe Brook was named 'Altar Bridge', and Coupe (1987, 43) suggested that this was the 'Salterbrigge' of the 1176 grant. As the other placenames are located to the north, north-west and west, and south-west, of the bridge, then it can be safely assumed that the study area was located within the granted estate.

The extent and composition of the estate, especially at such great distance from the parent monastic house, would strongly suggest that it was managed from an administrative grange located within the boundary, probably run by lay brothers. Such a grange would have included a farmhouse, barns, and shippons, but it is impossible to predict the likely location of such an establishment. Certainly sheep and cattle would have been raised, and the existence of extensive areas of 'ridge & furrow' in the upper part of the valley of the Holcombe Brook would suggest that assarting of previously wooded areas may well have occurred in the three centuries prior to Henry VII's disafforestation order of 1507, related to Crown Lands in Lancashire (Tallis & McGuire, 1972, 734-5)

The suffix of the place-name Holcombe defines a cirque or corrie ('cwm' in Celtic), which is an amphitheatre-like valley head. The existing Holcombe village, clustered around the present Emmanuel Church, occupies an exposed location high on the flank of the Irwell valley, wholly dissimilar to an enclosed valley head. However, the headwaters of the Holcombe Brook, in the vicinity of Holcombe Head Farm and Holcombe Hey Fold Farm, c.2km to the north-west of the study area, are contained within an impressive valley headwall, which is probably the nearest topographic feature to a corrie in the West Pennine Moors. It is this feature which was enclosed by the boundary of the monastic grant, whereas the present village was on the eastern edge of the boundary, and may have developed here solely due to the existence of the early post-medieval chapel.

The name 'Salterbrigge' implies that this was on a 'saltway' extending northwards from the Cheshire salt pans. A number of such routes have been identified crossing the Peak District and the Pennines from Cheshire (Dodd, & Dodd, 2004, 123-4), and this may well be another example, possibly extending up into the Rossendale valley.

In 1256, the de Bury family, Lords of the Manor of Bury, were engaged in conflict with Roger Nuttall of Nuttall, over the ownership of the two corn mills in Tottington (Farrer & Brownbill, 1911, 136), one of which could be assumed to be that at Holcombe Brook, just 60m to the east of the study area.

4.4 Early post-medieval period

Before the Dissolution of 1539, Holcombe had come into the possession of Whalley Abbey, and in 1546 the Crown sold the Holcombe estate to John Braddyll of Whalley and Portfield (Farrer & Brownbill, 1911, 145). He then sold the land on piecemeal, with the Holt family of Stubley Hall acquiring parts of Holcombe, Holcombe Brook, Hawkshaw and Greenmount (Coupe, 1987, 8).

It has been suggested that the Holt family erected Hey House, a grade II* listed building, located 400m to the north of the study area (Coupe, 1987, 8); but there are also claims that it was built by Roger Browne, in 1616, or by the de Trafford family as a hunting lodge, as it contains a window with the de Trafford crest of a leopard's heads. There is also a variety of carved woodwork, including pews, said to be from Whalley Abbey. The Holt family are known to have acquired other former monastic property, including Stydd Chapel, near Ribchester, and it is possible that the woodwork was taken from that building, rather than from Whalley Abbey.

The cruck-framed barn at Hollingrove Farm, 600m to the west of the study area, has been suggested as a 16th century building, and if that claim is correct, then it may have originated as a monastic grange, or alternatively, as a tenanted farm, established by Whalley Abbey within their Holcombe estate. However, it is not known how the dating of the property has been established, and it is likely that the barn could have originated during the 17th, or even the 18th century, instead. The placename 'Hollingrove' is of particular interest, as 'hollins' were holly groves or stands of holly within larger woods, which were exploited as winter fodder for animals, branches being lopped off and stored in a barn. Hollins were very important in upland areas, and were frequently leased by tenants separately from their main holdings (Muir, 2005, 25-27). It is possible that the 'Hollingrove' placename originated within the monastic estate of Holcombe, even if the existing barn was erected at a later date.

During the late 20th century, claims were made for the existence of a Tudor iron bloomery, complete with blast-furnaces, at Cinder Hill, c.2km to the north-west of the study area. These claims were based, somewhat scantily, upon the placename and upon the former existence of a dump of cinder at this location. Recent research has demonstrated that the earthworks here (including the so-called 'Pond Bay'), and the visible masonry walls and floors, are in fact parts of two early 19th century cotton mills (N. Tyson, Bury Archaeological Group, pers. comm.).

4.5 Late post-medieval period

Yates Map of Lancashire (**Figure 2**), surveyed in 1780, and published in 1786, shows a number of farmsteads on the higher ground to either side of the Holcombe Brook, as well as a concentration of buildings at the present road junction to the south-east of the study area. He indicated locations of water-powered mills by use of a waterwheel symbol, but none at all were shown on the Holcombe Brook. He does indicate the position of Tottington Mill on the

Kirklees Brook further to the south, and it is surprising that he does not show the corn mill at Holcombe Brook, unless at that time it was out of commission.

The 1794 Survey of Tottington Lower End (LRO, DDK/118) recorded that at 'Lower Redisher', James Ramsbottom had an engine building. The present farm of Lower Redisher is located only 200m to the west of the site, and it is likely that the study area was considered as part of the Lower Redisher estate.

The first definitive mention of a mill at Redisher was by Coupe (1977, 99) who claimed that a woman born at Cheetham Hill in 1800, who worked at 'Edishaw Wood' [Redisher] Mill as a young girl, recalled that one of her duties was to drive cows to Turton fair. This would imply that the mill may have been in existence before about 1810, even if it wasn't referred to in the 1794 survey. This also exemplifies the nature of the 'dual economy' at that time, whereby rural industrial concerns were run in very close co-operation with farms, frequently by the same individuals.

In 1811 Samuel Crompton's Spindle List indicated that Joseph Wood had 584 throstle spindles at Higher Redisher ((BA, ZCR, 1811), although there is no evidence for any factory at Higher Redisher. The average Arkwright mill in that period was running 2,000 spindles, driven by a 20hp waterwheel.

Greenwood's Map of Lancashire (**Figure 3**), published in 1818, indicated significant changes in the area. This provides the earliest cartographic indication of industrialisation within the Holcombe Brook valley. A string of four reservoirs are shown in the 'Reddishaw' area, including those at the corn mill, the study area, and two above the 'Ridge Cotton Mill', as shown on the later 1844-7 O.S. plan. Also, a number of new turnpike roads were by then in existence, including the east-west road from Walves to Holcombe Brook (Edenfield and Little Bolton Trust), and the north-south road from Brandlesholme to Holcombe Brook (Elton and Blackburn Trust). These transport improvements resulted in an important 'node' at Holcombe Brook, which would have provided further incentive to industrial development.

In Pigot and Slater's 1841 *Trade Directory*, Ambrose F. Wilkinson was the first mentioned owner of 'Redisher bleach works', he was listed as of Radisher (*sic*) wood, and was a bleacher and shopkeeper.

On the 1842 Tithe plan (**Figure 4**), the building was shown as a rectangular north-south building, the northern part of which was offset towards the east. To the west was a triangular shaped millpond, with a smaller rectangular one adjacent. To the east was a third pond, possibly for tailwater from a waterwheel. Mr Wilkinson was listed as the occupier, with 1 acre, 2 rods, and 37 perches, and the owner was Martha Ramsbottom (LRO, DRM 1/98).

The First Edition Ordnance Survey plan, surveyed in 1844-7 (**Figure 5**), showed the site as indicated by the earlier Tithe plan, with the building described as 'Radisher Wood Bleach Works'. The hamlet of 'Holcombe Brook' had developed around 'Altar Bridge', near to the 'Corn Mill', and a 'Workhouse' had been erected.

By 1850, Ambrose Frankland Wilkinson was no longer listed as a shopkeeper, but solely as a bleacher, also having premises, presumably a warehouse, at 13 Watling Street, Manchester (*Bury Directory*, 1850). He was listed in the 1853 *Trade Directory for Manchester District* as having a Warehouse at 56 George Street, Manchester, rather than Watling Street.

However, by 1864 the premises was no longer occupied by Mr. Wilkinson, but by Mr. William Warburton and Mr. William Brauman (BAS, PUB/8/21, 100) The works were then known as the 'Old Bleach Works' and described as being of two stories, with an area of 192 square yards. It was also stated that the works had engine power, water power, and two chimneys, although in subsequent accounts only one chimney was listed. There was also a 'chemical works' listed (single story 197 square yards), empty at that time and a room over it (215 square yards).

The works were auctioned on the 30th May 1866 by Mr. S. Jackson at the Derby Hotel, Bury, including the land (*Bury Times*, 12th May, 1866). Also included in the sale were the cottages on the estate, occupied by Mr. H. Slinger and Mr. and Miss W. Warburton, the estate totalling 36 acres. It also notes that a Mr Arthur Kay was occupying the works at the time of auction.

It appears that the works and the land were purchased by Mr Samuel Knowles and Co, who was listed as owner and occupier in 1870. The works comprised a two storey warehouse (179 sq yds); a two storey store (314 sq yds); a single storey [bleaching?] croft (457 sq yds); a single storey engine house (31 sq yds); a single story boiler house (38 sq yds); an unloading place (85 sq yds); 'Water Privileges' and 'Engine Power'. The gross estimated rental for this was £115, with a rateable value of £97 15s (BAS, PUB/8/25).

The layout of the works was similar in 1876 and 1882, although the rateable value had increased to £100 12s 6d; and in 1882 the gross estimated rental dropped to £110, with a rateable value of £88, and the addition of 'Engine power and fixed machinery' to the list. A single chimney was noted as 20 yards high (BAS, PUB/8/44; PUB/8/66).

There was also note of a colliery (possibly a brickworks, as the millstone grit does not contain coal seams, see below) in Redisher, owned by Samuel Knowles and Co. in 1870 (BAS, PUB/8/25). Samuel Knowles and his brother Joshua, formerly an employee of the Grant brothers of Ramsbottom, were significant entrepreneurs in the Tottington district and owned several works at this time, including the two bleach works at Kirklees and Tottington Mill (Coupe, 1987).

In 1882, the Tottington Branch Line of the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway Company, between Bury and Holcombe Brook was opened, the terminal station being located just 300m to the south-east of the study area. Naturally, Samuel Knowles was a subscriber to this venture, which connected with the main line north of Bury, removing the disadvantage of isolation (Wells 1995, 78). His enterprise at Tottington Mill was served by a purpose-built siding on

the railway line; hence his Redisher Works was part of a larger concern with in-built economies of scale.

The O.S. plan published in 1893 (**Figure 6**), and surveyed two years earlier, shows how the site had altered over the previous four decades. The southern half of the original mill had been demolished, and the northern half had been extended to the east, possibly after being acquired by Samuel Knowles in c.1866. A good section of the stream channel to the south of the mill had been culverted. The valley side to the south-west of the mill was marked as 'Old Quarry', and in the valley bottom to the south-east of the mill was a 'Brick Works', consisting of four rectangular structures. From the north-westernmost structure, a tramway extended northwards up into a minor valley, passing beneath the trackway here by a tunnel. The trackway terminal comprised three 'fingers' within the 'Clay Pit'.

The clay pit may have been referred to in 1870 as a 'colliery', as the underlying millstone grit does not contain any coal seams. It was not uncommon in the 1890's for brickworks to open only to close a few years later. There were several reasons for their closing, including the depletion of their raw material, but many may have been established in an attempt to emulate the success achieved by brickworks in the Accrington area (Rossendale Groundwork Trust & Rossendale Borough Council, nd)

Samuel Knowles and Co. subsequently sold the works, which were purchased by Colonel Charles Ainsworth and re-opened in 1898 (Millar and Hall, nd). When the 'Bleachers' Association' was formed in 1900, most local bleachworks, including Charles Whowell Ltd, of Hawkshaw, joined the amalgamation (Sykes, 1925, 34-5), but there was no evidence that Ainsworth ever joined the Association, and nor were Tottington Mill or Kirklees Mill listed.

Charles Ainsworth may have been related to the Ainsworth family who had established the bleach works at Halliwell, Bolton, and he was elected Conservative M.P. for Bury in 1918 (*Bury Times*, December 14th 1918), defeating Sir George Toulmin, and he served as M.P. until 1935. The bleach works was renamed as 'Redisher Works', and it also incorporated dyeing, and later was used to dye clothes for the army (*Bury Times*, 8th November 1961)

The re-opening of Redisher Works was also confirmed in the 1913 *North-Western Counties of England Trades Directory*. Here it is stated as being owned by Charles Ainsworth & Co. Ltd., with a note that goods were to go to L. & Y. Railway, Holcombe Brook, obviously taking advantage of the branch line constructed in 1882 (Wells 1995, 78). The Works can also be found under 'dyers' in the same directory and again in *Kelly's Lancashire Directory* of 1924 (p1748). Charles Ainsworth & Co. also had a winning sports team, of which there is 20th century photographic evidence.

The 1935 O.S. plan (**Figure 7**) indicates that the works had been extended both to the south and to the east, with the stream being further culverted, and

the millpond of the corn mill (subsequently used as a cotton mill) being infilled, and a series of filter beds occupying the site.

The works were closed at the end of 1961 under the Cotton Re-organisation Scheme and it was estimated that this, along with the closure of Rigg Brothers Ltd, spinners and manufacturers in Hawkshaw, would result in the loss of around 200 jobs, 80 of them from the Redisher Works (*Bury Times*, 8th November 1961).

In 1965 a Salford engineering firm was negotiating its purchase (*Bury Times*, 16th January 1965) although in 1972 it is noted that on land "at the foot of Holcombe Hill near picturesque Redisher Woods" (*Bury Times*, 2nd February 1979, 62), R.W. Studdards of Bradford were planning to build between 50 and 70 homes. This was against the wishes of much of the village population, who petitioned the plans and subsequently it was refused.

The site owners in 1978 were Cheswick and Wright, a company manufacturing exhaust parts. A proposal to build houses on the site was put forward again in 2004, when an appeal was lodged on 21st April. It was noted in the planning control minutes on 9th November, however, that "Redisher Works, Holcombe Old Road, Holcombe Brook, Bury - Ramsbottom Ward (Demolition of existing premises and regeneration for mixed residential/employment scheme including highway improvements, new footpath links and river restoration -approx 45 dwellings) be refused" (<http://burydem.bury.gov.uk/>).

4. GAZETTEER (see Figure 8)

1. **Redisher Wood Bleach Works**
According to the Tithe plan of 1842 (**Figure 4**) and the O.S. 1844-7 plan (**Figure 5**), the original mill building extended at right angles to the Holcombe Brook, and measured c.50m north-south by 20m east-west. Much of the western part of the building would be located on the earthen dam of the millpond, while most of the eastern part would lie beneath the concrete yard area.

2. **Bleachworks Extension**
The 1891 O.S. plan (**Figure 6**) indicates that the southern half of (1) had been demolished by then, but the northern half had been extended westwards, across the site of the tailpond (21).

3. **South terminal of brickworks tramway**
The 1891 O.S. plan (**Figure 6**) shows a short section of tramline, extending northwards from a rectangular building located to the east of the mill.

4. **Brick Works**
The 1891 O.S. plan (**Figure 6**) shows a collection of three rectangular buildings located in the valley bottom, indicated as 'Brick Works'.

5. **Southward bleach works extension**
The 1935 O.S. plan (**Figure 7**) shows that the bleach works had been extended southwards again, across the area previously occupied by the works, then demolished between 1844-7 and 1891.

6. **Boiler House and Chimney**
The 1935 O.S. plan (**Figure 7**) shows a building within the angle formed by the north-south and east-west limbs of the works, with a chimney at its east end. The scale of the building would suggest a boiler house, housing two or three Lancashire boilers. This steam plant was probably erected in association with the expansion of the works, when buildings (5) and (8) were constructed.

7. **Engine/dynamo house?**
The 1935 O.S. plan (**Figure 7**) shows a small building located just to the east of the chimney site. This structure still stands, and has been integrated with more modern buildings. It is 7m high, of machine made brick in an EGW bond, and has a large original double-doorway in the south elevation, above which are a number of ashlar sandstone bearing blocks, two of which support the ends of cast-iron I-section beams. In more recent years, it has been utilised as an electrical substation, suggesting that originally it may have functioned as a small steam engine house, or a dynamo house, generating electrical power for the site.

8. **Eastward bleach works extension**
The 1935 O.S. plan (**Figure 7**) shows that the works had been significantly extended, requiring the demolition of structures (3) and (4), and further

culverting of the stream channel. An obvious butt joint was noted at location (14) in the north wall of the mill.

9. **Masonry Weir**
A short distance upstream from the works is an impressive vertical weir, constructed of large blocks of rusticated gritstone, about 6m high. This weir pools back a long, narrow pond, and diverts water into the headrace channel (10). It may have been constructed to enhance a natural waterfall, as the sluice in the weir face, for draining the pool, is only about 2.5m below the weir lip.

10. **Headrace channel**
This feature has been used to divert water from the weir (9), to the north-west corner of the works site, presumably filling the millponds (11) and (12). However, the Tithe plan (**Figure 4**) and the 1844-7 O.S. plan (**Figure 5**) both suggest that the original head race was nearer to the Holcombe Brook.

11. **'Dipping Pond'**
This small pond, recently restored, was created between c.1847 and 1891, by the partial infilling of the original millpond.

12. **Millpond**
This former pond, now overgrown and silted up, was also formed from the earlier millpond in c.1847 to 1891. It was fed from headrace (10), was connected by a channel to (11), and discharged back to the stream via an overflow at its southern extremity.

13. **North-western corner of bleachworks**
This area was overbuilt between 1891 (Figure 6) and 1935 (Figure 7). The remains of the west mill wall are of machine-made Accrington Brick, from Huncoat. The north wall comprises a high stonework abutment against the valley side. Contained within this angle is a brickwork channel which continues the line of headrace (10), and the remains of a bleachcroft, with stone-flagged cisterns and iron sours intact. This area was heavily overgrown, and difficult to view properly.

14. **Walls of bleach works**
At this location, the modern Redisher Works contained earlier fabric. The north wall of the building was of two separate phases. To the east, the later wall was of machine-made brick, about 6m high, and was subdivided by pilasters at roof bay intervals, with recessed panels between. To the west, the earlier wall was lower, of machine-made brick, with pilasters rising above parapet level. Just to the west of the butt joint was a large cast-iron wall-box, with oil staining below, indicating the northernmost bearing location of a wall-mounted driveshaft.

15. **Tramway tunnel**
The 1891 O.S. plan (**Figure 6**) shows the tramway for the brickworks passing beneath the trackway which runs along the northern valley slope. At this location is the mouth of a tunnel, the soffit being just visible in the steep slope overlooking the works site. It is of machine-made brick, and possibly 2m

wide, but almost filled up internally. A later pipe, at a much lower level, takes water from the clay pit site (16), into the drain on the north side of the works.

16. **Clay Pit**
A 'Clay Pit' was shown here on the 1891 O.S. plan (**Figure 6**), where clay was being won for the nearby 'Brick Works'. This feature appears to be a minor natural valley, which has been significantly enlarged by excavation. A pond was shown here on the 1935 O.S. plan (**Figure 7**), but this has now been infilled, partly by construction debris.

17. **Structure**
The stone foundation of a long, narrow building can be seen here, with an integral stoneware drain at its south-eastern end. It was first shown on the 1935 O.S. plan (**Figure 7**).

18. **Structure**
A 4m high ruined building, with machine-made brick walls and concrete beam floors, is located here. It was not shown on the 1935 O.S. plan (**Figure 7**), and was probably erected later.

19. **Tunnel or culvert**
A rectangular-section tunnel extends from the Kirklees Brook at the western end of the works site, to a point where it emerges into the yard area, about 55m further downstream. It is about 2m high inside, the floor being 1m below yard level. The roof is of concrete slabs, supported upon wrought-iron or steel I-section beams, and it is suggested as a flood-alleviation feature, to divert any overflow from the stream past the works. It appears to be shown in part on the O.S. 1935 plan (**Figure 7**).

20. **'Old Quarry'**
An old quarry was shown on the O.S. 1891 plan, against the valley side just to the south of the works. The weathered gritstone outcrop can still be seen here.

21. **Tailpond**
A rectangular pond is shown to the east of the works site, on the 1842 Tithe plan (**Figure 4**) and the 1844-7 O.S. plan (**Figure 5**). This is suggested as a 'tailpond', employed to ensure that water discharged from a waterwheel does not 'backwater' onto the wheel and impede the rotation.

22. **Millpond of corn mill**
The millpond of the corn mill (23) was of considerable size, but was infilled between 1891 (**Figure 6**) and 1935 (**Figure 7**). As the corn mill probably originated in the medieval period, the millpond may be of considerable interest from a palaeoenvironmental viewpoint.

23. **Corn mill**
A corn mill at Holcombe was first recorded in 1256, and by the 16th century it was under the control of the Greenhalgh family, stewards of the Manor of Bury. It was indicated as 'Corn Mill' on the O.S. 1844-7 plan (**Figure 5**), but by 1891 it was in use as a cotton mill (**Figure 6**). The millpond had been

infilled by 1935, which suggested that it was no longer utilising water power by that date. Some *in situ* masonry can be seen at the site, immediately to the rear of the 'Hare & Hounds' pub, but most of the site appears to be obscured by modern debris and vegetation.

24. Oil Tank Platform

Just to the north-west of (18) was a level platform constructed against the valley slope, with a masonry revetment on its north side. Two sets of *in situ* cast-concrete 'saddles' indicated the former existence of a pair of large cylindrical tanks here, probably for oil; these were shown on the 1935 O.S. plan.

6. INTERPRETATION

6.1 Prehistoric/Roman period

There was no significant evidence for any activity in the vicinity of the study area, dating from this period. Although it is of course possible that evidence of these period may come to light during construction activity, it is most probable that truncation related to the later site history makes this somewhat unlikely.

A low to nil potential is therefore identified for prehistoric period activity.

6.2 Medieval/early post-medieval period

The corn mill (23) at Holcombe Brook probably existed before 1246, and as the corn mill site was almost certainly within the area of the monastic grant of 1176, the mill may well have had a monastic foundation. Although the corn mill site is located a short distance outside the study area, the western part of the former millpond (22) is within the study area. If parts of the millpond silted up naturally, it is likely that silt deposits of medieval or early post-medieval origin may survive *in situ*. Any such deposits would contain pollen and macrofossil evidence for that period, and if wood remains survived, such as twigs and branches, then dendrochronological or radiocarbon assays might be possible.

On this basis, therefore, the potential for medieval period remains is medium to low.

6.3 Late post-medieval period

Available documentary and cartographic evidence suggests that a textile works was erected at Redisher within the first or second decade of the 19th century. It is possible that initially this was a cotton spinning mill, rather than a bleachworks, as a number of spinning mills were established on the Holcombe Brook, both above and below the study area.

The cartographic evidence for the 1840's suggests a typical water-powered mill site, with a high weir delivering a considerable head of water, to power one or more large diameter, but limited width, waterwheels. The existence of a tailpond suggests that potential backwatering of the waterwheels may have been an issue. Certainly by the 1840's the site was in use as a bleachworks, and by 1864 it had one or more steam engines and two chimneys, as well as water power.

The bleachworks site was significantly altered between 1844-7 and 1891, when part of the original building was demolished, and an extension (2) created. This work may have coincided with the new layout of the millponds to the west of the mill, and the infilling of the tailpond to the east. It is suggested that within this period, possibly in c.1866, when the site changed hands, water power was wholly replaced by steam power, and the works massively expanded.

Visual inspection of the site has revealed surviving physical fabric dated to the period between 1891 and 1935. It seems highly probable that earlier structures will survive at the west end of the study area, within the mill dam, and beneath the concrete yard area.

The well documented useage of the study area during this period, coupled with survival of physical fabric, means that a high to very high archaeological potential is identified.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Archaeological trial-trenching

Given the scale of the proposed redevelopment, it would be safe to assume that groundworks will probably truncate any surviving archaeological features or deposits. Therefore, it is recommended that archaeological trial trenching should aim to identify two specific targets:

(a) Firstly, any surviving medieval or early post-medieval deposits within the infilled millpond of the corn mill.

(b) Secondly, any below-ground remains at the west end of the site, potentially including water wheel pits, dash wheel pits, or engine/boiler houses.

In the event that significant remains were identified, then further investigation should be undertaken, either additional excavation, or a watching brief during construction groundworks.

7.2 Building Recording

A detailed plan and photographic record should be made of the late 19th and early 20th century features located at the north-west corner of the site (13), in advance of demolition, but following tree-clearance. Similar work should be undertaken on building (7) prior to any demolition.

7.3 Historical Signage

Some form of permanent signage should be located near to the entrance to the new development, possibly on Holcombe Old Road, outlining the history and archaeology of the site, for the benefit of visitors and walkers.

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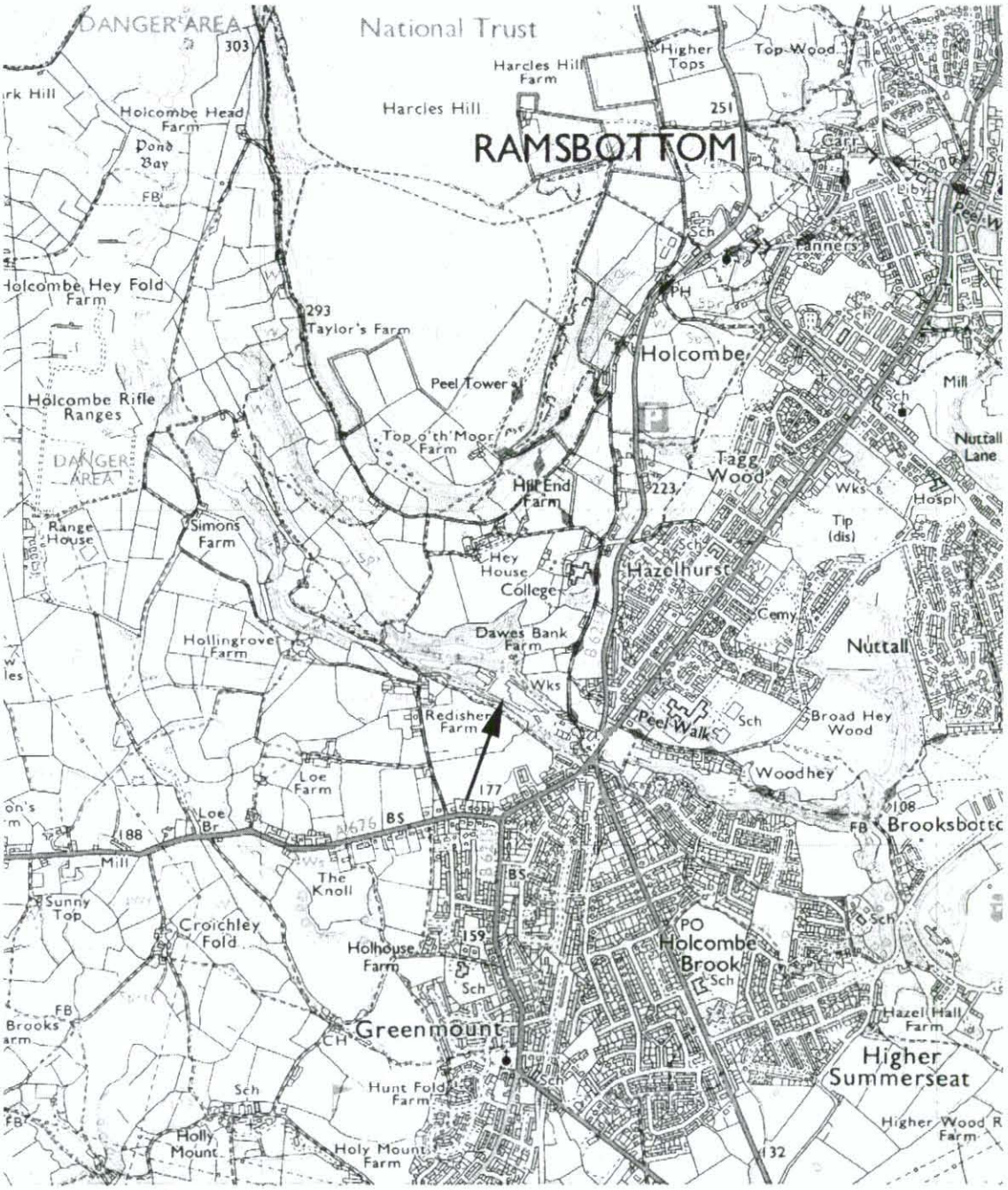

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Figure 1. Site Location Map, O.S. 1:25,000 sheet

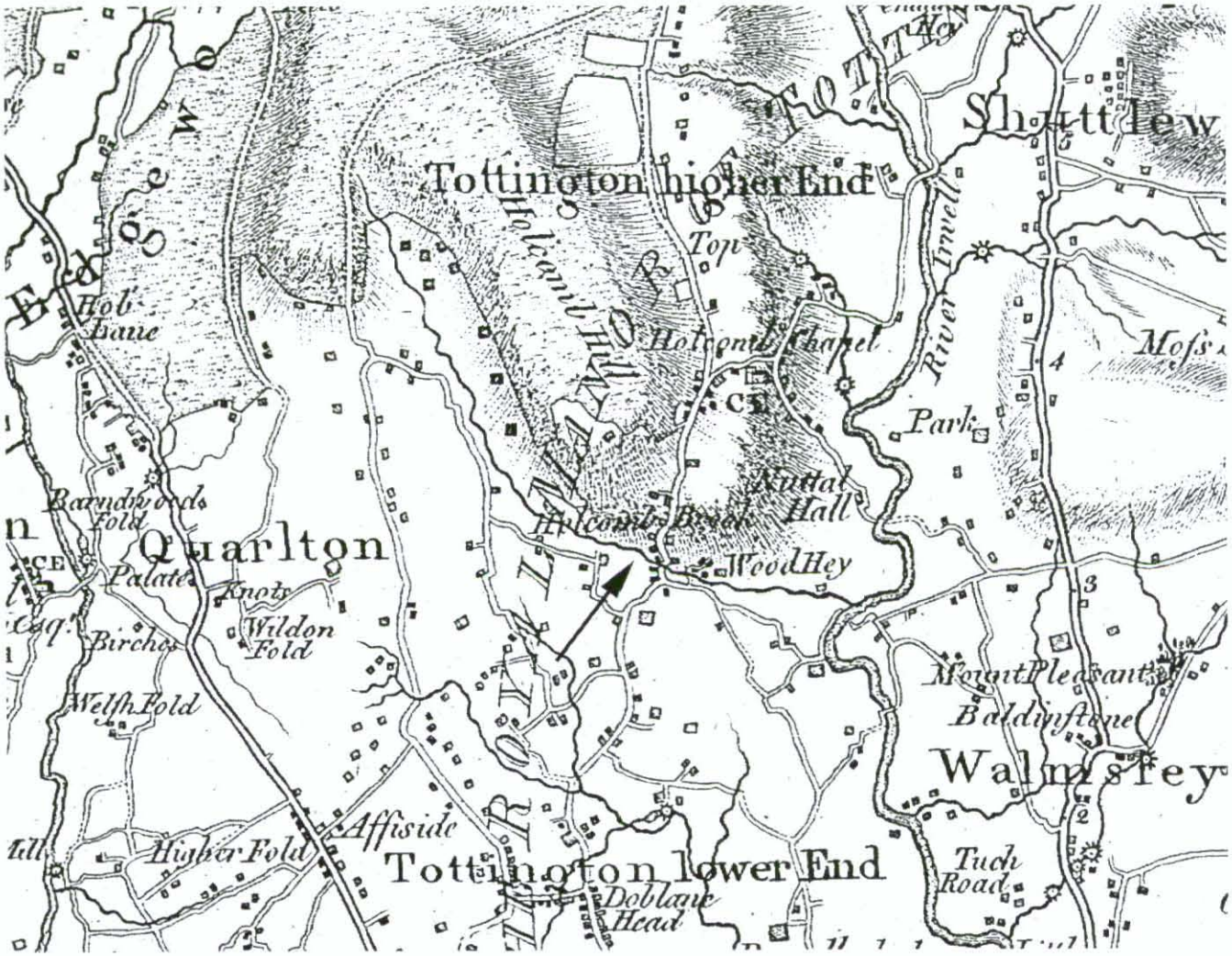


Figure 2. Site shown on Yates Map of Lancashire, published 1786

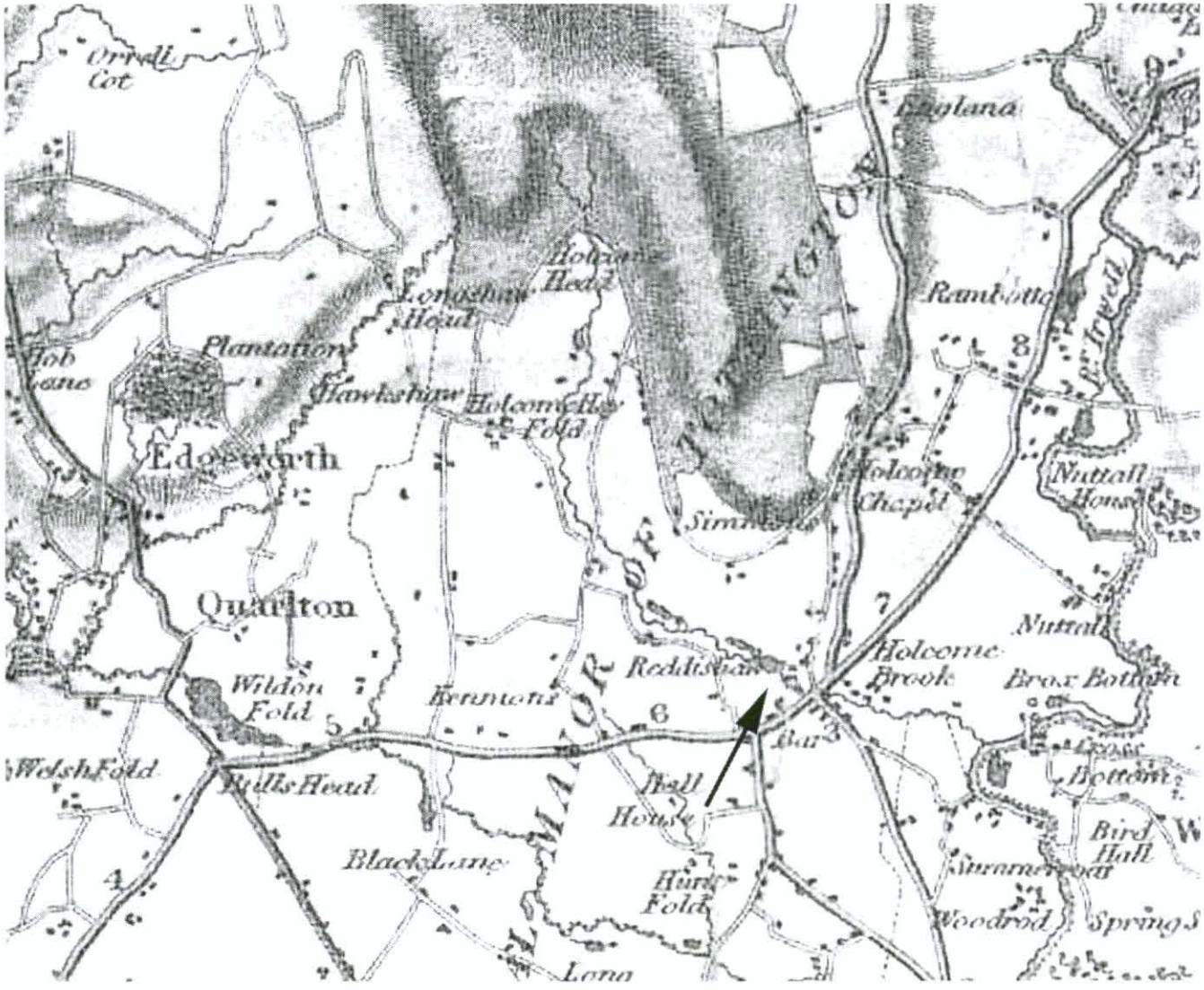


Figure 3. Site shown on Greenwood's Map of Lancashire, published 1818

Figure 4. Site shown on 1842 Tithe plan, Tottington Lower End

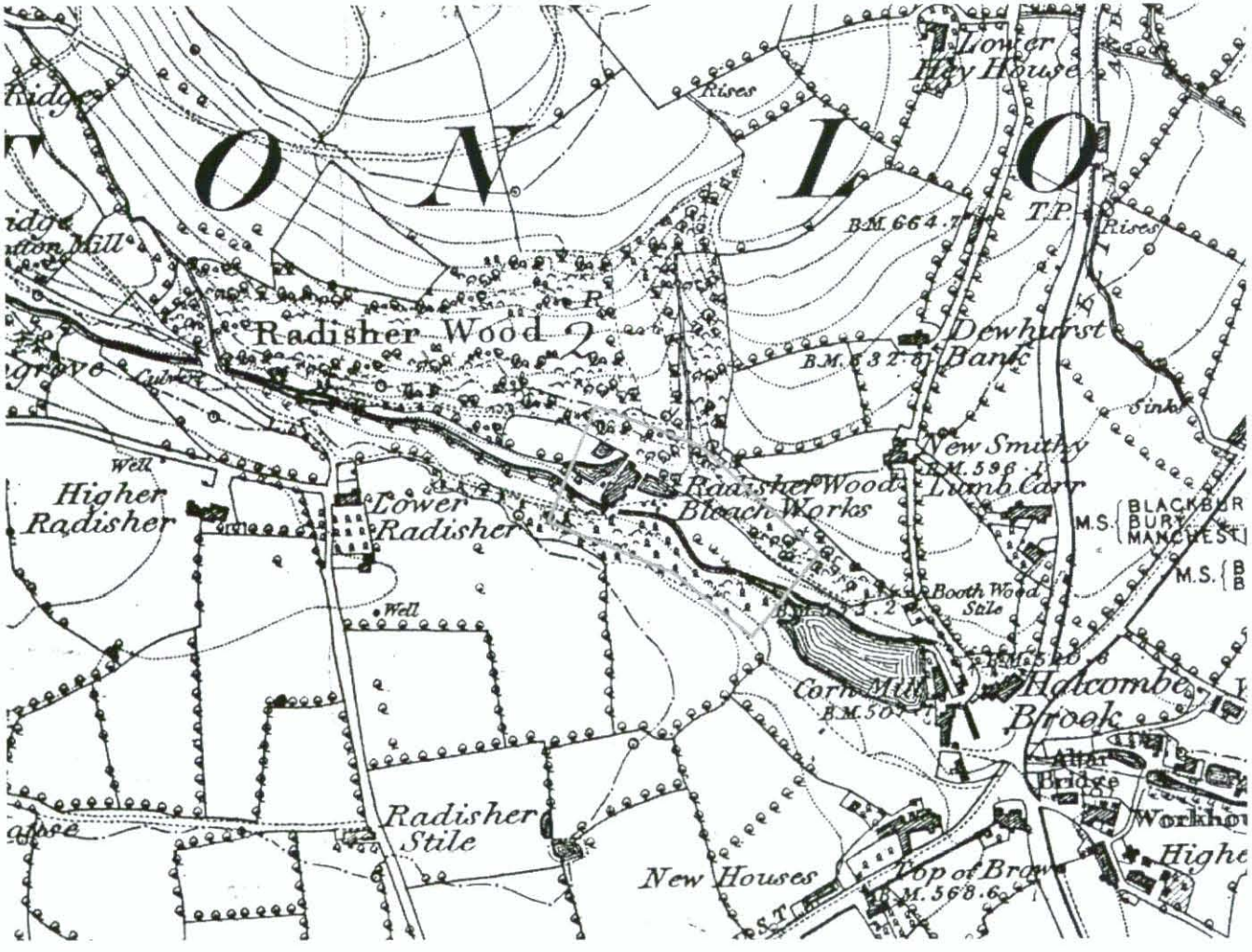


Figure 5. Site shown on O.S. plan, 1:10,560 scale, surveyed in 1844-7

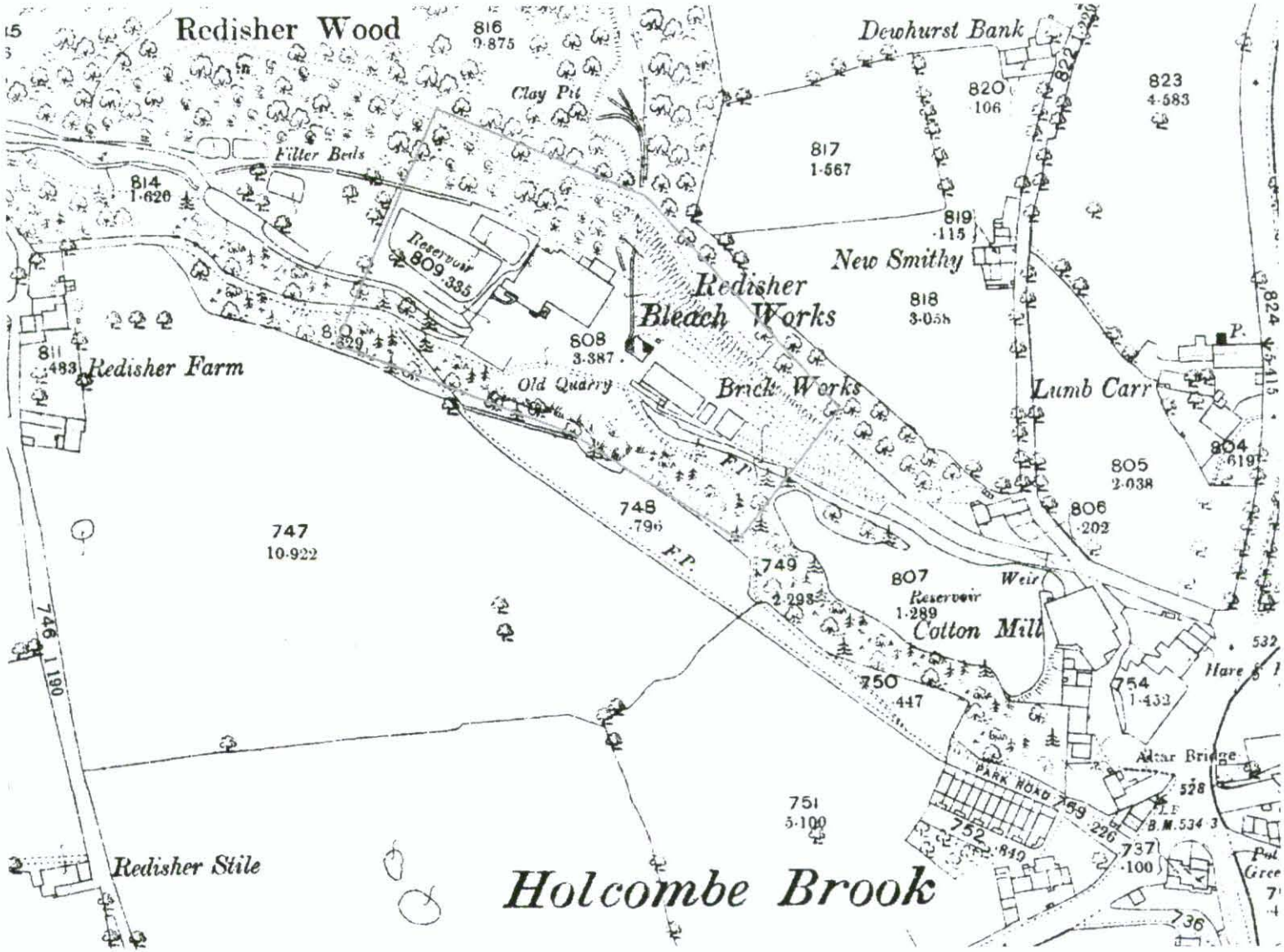


Figure 6. Site shown on O.S. plan surveyed in 1891

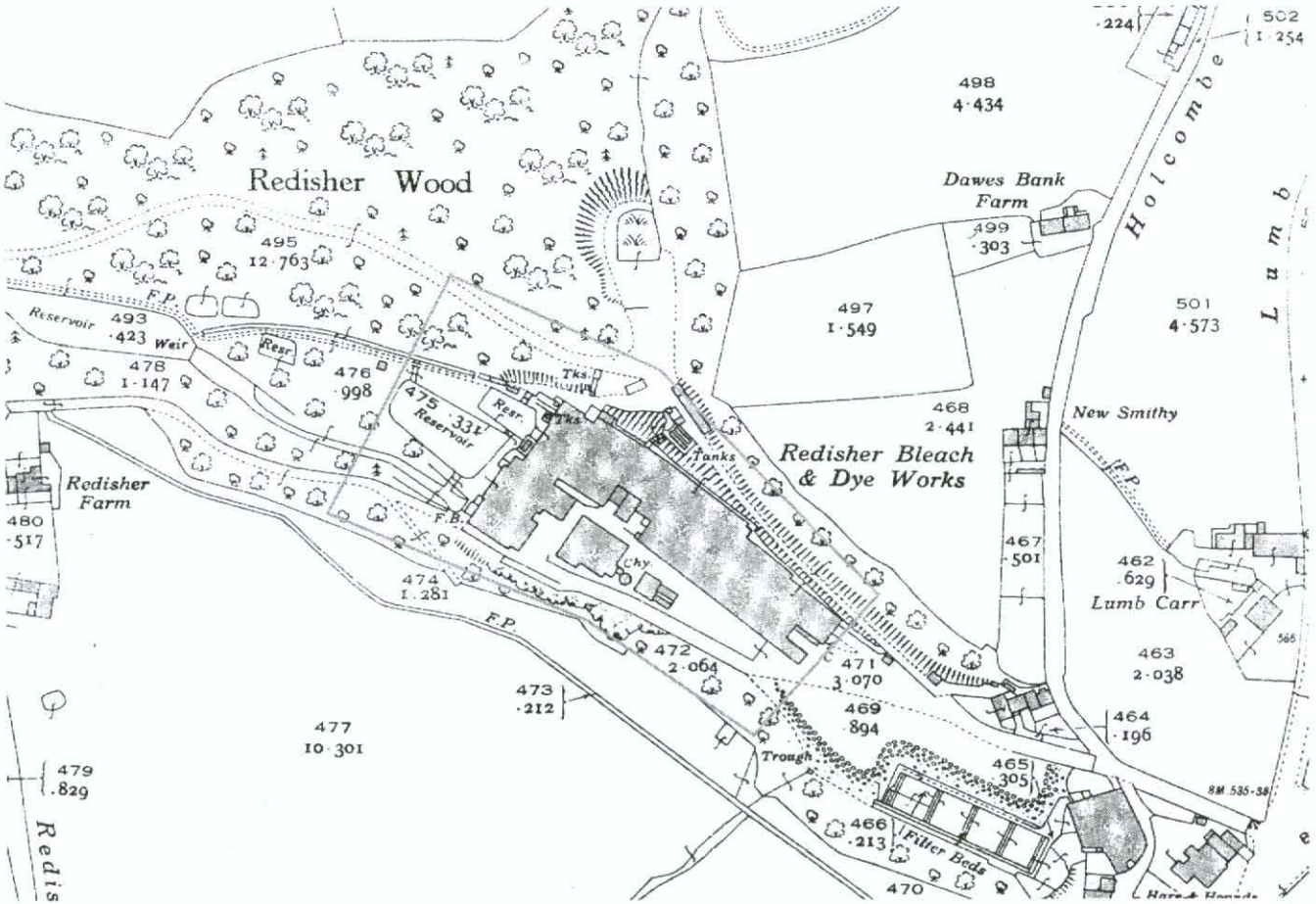
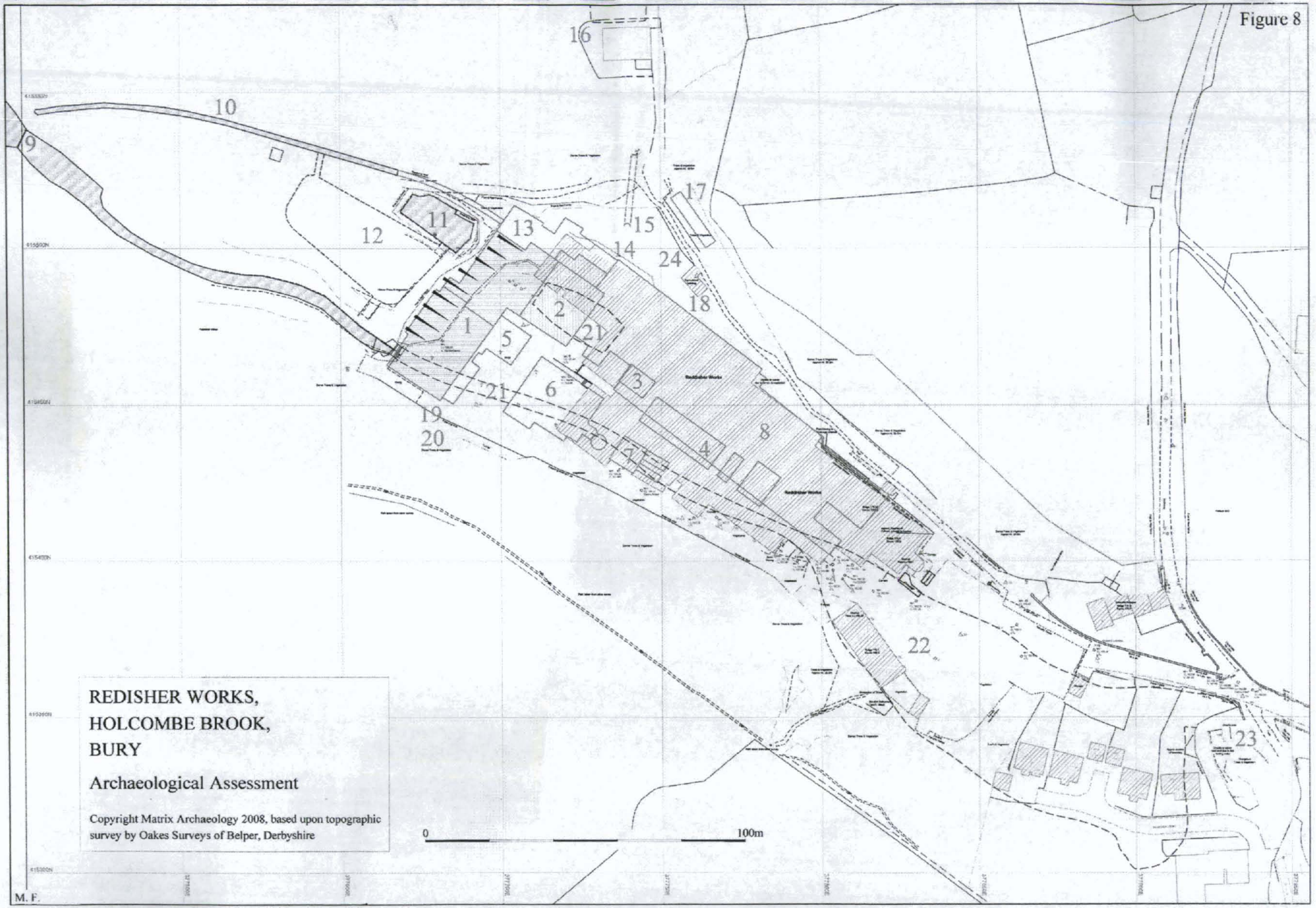


Figure 7. Site shown on O.S. plan surveyed in 1935

Figure 8



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Archaeological Assessment

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M. F.